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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Gas

Fifth session
Geneva, 22 and 23 March 2018
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the fifth session

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on Thursday 22 March 2018[1]

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Opening remarks.
3. Election of officers.
4. The role of gas in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.
5. Promoting sustainable and clean production, distribution, and consumption of gas and liquefied natural gas..
6. Update on activities related to gas developments in United Nations Economic Commission for Europe member States and gas industry organizations and associations.
7. Best practices in managing methane emissions along the gas value chain.

[1] Delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations are requested to register online (http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47520), if possible at least two weeks prior to the session. On the day of the meeting, delegates are requested to present themselves at least 45 minutes prior to the start time at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix, opposite the Red Cross Building (see the map on the Energy Division's website) for the issuance of an identification badge. Registration is open every work day at the Pregny Gate from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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8. The role of gas in improving urban and indoor air quality.

9. Activities and priorities of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and its Executive Committee and the Committee on Sustainable Energy.

10. Exploring synergies between gas, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

11. Emerging issues.

12. Preparations for the sixth session of the Group of Experts.

13. Any other business.

14. Adoption of conclusions and recommendations.

15. Adoption of the report and close of the meeting.

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda

In accordance with the rules of procedure of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the first item on the provisional agenda is the adoption of the agenda. The documents for the session will be published on the ECE Sustainable Energy Division natural gas website[2], as soon as they become available.

2. Opening remarks

Opening remarks will review how current and future efforts of the Group of Experts on Gas help ECE member States deliver on key political commitments, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change in the wider context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. Election of officers

At its third session held in April 2016, the Group of Experts elected a Bureau to serve for two years. The Group of Experts will elect a new Bureau to serve from the end of the fifth session for a period of two years.

4. The role of gas in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals

The Group of Experts will discuss a number of concrete examples of how gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) could enable ECE member States to attain selected of the Sustainable Development Goals. These are Goal 1 (no poverty), Goal 2 (zero hunger), Goal 3 (good health and well-being), Goal 5 (gender), Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation), Goal 7 (affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy), Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth), Goal 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), Goal 11 (inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities), Goal 12 (sustainable consumption and production patterns), and Goal 13 (climate action). Gas is particularly relevant to the three objectives of Goal 7 – to increase access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, to accelerate

[2] http://www.unece.org/energy/se/docs/natural_gas.html

the uptake of renewable energy, and, by replacing coal where possible, to improve energy efficiency of the electricity system.

5. Promoting sustainable and clean production, distribution, and consumption of gas and liquefied natural gas

The Group of Experts' core mandate is to provide a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on ways to promote the sustainable and clean production, distribution, and consumption of gas and LNG in the ECE region. This annual roundtable will discuss a number of relevant political and technical developments on current and emerging gas topics.

6. Update on activities related to gas developments in United Nations Economic Commission for Europe member States and gas industry organizations and associations

Representatives of ECE member States, the gas industry, and international governmental and non-governmental organizations will present developments in their gas operations and market and other developments in 2017 and the first quarter of 2018. The Group of Experts requests representatives of member States and other organizations to submit, when possible, electronic versions of their presentations to the secretariat in advance, in one of the ECE three working languages (English, French, or Russian).

7. Best practices in managing methane emissions along the gas value chain

In late 2017, ECE started implementation of the project: "Methane Management in Extractive Industries (Upstream Oil and Gas / Downstream Gas)", funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The key project deliverable is best practices for (a) measurement, reporting, and verification of methane emissions, and (b) reducing methane emissions in these industries. The Group of Experts will discuss the progress made in the project's implementation.

The Group of Experts will also be informed about the outcomes of the workshop on reducing gas sector methane emissions held on 21 March 2018 in Geneva.

8. The role of gas in improving urban and indoor air quality

The Group of Experts will discuss how an increased reliance on natural gas in electricity generation could significantly reduce concentrations of airborne pollutants – nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, methane, volatile organic compounds, sulphur dioxide, and particulate matter – and hence improve urban air quality. Replacing some transportation fuels with gas could help further improve air quality, in particular in the urban areas of the economies in transition of the ECE region.

The absolute number of people relying on polluting fuels for cooking, such as solid fuels and kerosene, has actually increased to nearly three billion people. Gas, as the cleanest burning fuel, could help tackle indoor air pollution that has an adverse effect on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals related to poverty, gender equality, and good health and well-being.

9. Activities and priorities of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and its Executive Committee and the Committee on Sustainable Energy

The secretariat will inform the Group of Experts on relevant decisions and outcomes of the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy held in September 2017. One of the decisions is the approval of the Group of Expert's work plan for 2018–2019. The Group of Experts will explore synergies between subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, as well as with other ECE sectoral committees.

At its fourth session held in March 2017, the Group of Experts noted the proposal to upgrade the Group of Experts into a Working Party. The Group of Experts requested the secretariat to analyze the implications of such an upgrade and prepare a concept note with more information for the Group of Expert's fifth session (ECE/ENERGY/GE.8/2018/3).

The Committee on Sustainable Energy requested at its twenty-fifth session held in September 2016 and January 2017 that the Group of Experts explore the establishment of a gas industry advisory board and submit its recommendation to the Committee. At its fourth session held in March 2017, the Group of Experts noted that the ECE Executive Committee was weighing all options for enhancing dialogue between the gas industry and ECE member States, including the possibility for the Group of Experts on Gas to become the platform for the dialogue. The Group of Experts requested the secretariat to provide a concept note that explains possible options and how they may affect the Group of Experts on Gas. An update will be provided by the secretariat.

10. Exploring synergies between gas, renewable energy and energy efficiency

The Group of Experts will explore synergies between renewable energy and natural gas. There are significant opportunities to increase the efficiency of the entire energy system by combining natural gas with renewable energy sources, which may lower carbon footprint of the energy sector. Representatives of the ECE Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity from Fossil Fuels and the ECE Group of Experts on Renewable Energy will join the discussion.

11. Emerging issues

The Group of Experts will focus on the economic and environmental interplay between conventional natural gas and a number of emerging concepts: biogas, synthetic gas, power-to-gas, and hydrogen that could represent an important component of the future energy system. Of all these concepts, biogas (or biomethane) is the most advanced technology.

12. Preparations for the sixth session of the Group of Experts

The Group of Experts will discuss preparations for its sixth session. Possible topics for the substantive portion of the session will be proposed and discussed. The sixth session of the Group of Experts is scheduled for the first quarter of 2019.

13. Any other business

The meeting may discuss other issues that arise before or during the session and that fall within the scope of the Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts. To the extent possible,

delegates are encouraged to notify the secretariat or the Chair in advance of any issue they may wish to raise under this agenda item.

14. Adoption of conclusions and recommendations

The Group of Experts will be invited to adopt conclusions and recommendations as may be agreed.

Where possible the draft conclusions and recommendations will be circulated to participants and Geneva Permanent Representations at least ten days before the start of the meeting.

15. Adoption of the report and close of the meeting

The Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, will summarize the agreed conclusions and recommendations. The Group of Experts will be invited to adopt its report based on a draft prepared by the secretariat in cooperation with the Bureau of the Group of Experts, following which the Chair will close the meeting.